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SB 3029  
RELATING TO THE TRANSFER OF THE  
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY CONTROL  
AND THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

Statement for  
Senate Committee on  
Planning and Environment  
Public Hearing - February 16, 1988

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SB 3029 would transfer the Office of Environmental Quality Control (OEQC) and the Environmental Council from the Department of Health (DOH) to the Office of the Governor.

This statement does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

In 1970 when the Office of Environmental Quality Control (OEQC) and the Environmental Council were originally established by Act 132, both were housed in the Office of the Governor. In 1980, in a major reorganizational move to consolidate and transfer many small programs out of the Governor's office to other principal departments according to common purposes and related functions, OEQC and the Environmental Council were transferred to the Department of Health (DOH) for administrative purposes.

At the time of the transfer, a number of concerns were raised questioning the efficacy of the transfer and the loss of neutrality of OEQC and the Environmental Council that the attachment to DOH would reflect. In 1985, the Legislative Reference Bureau, responding to House and Senate Concurrent Resolutions adopted during the 1984 legislative session, (SCR 135 and HCR 78) undertook an examination of the feasibility

of environmental reorganization for Hawaii and in particular the location and functions of OEQC and the Environmental Council. The result of this study was a recommendation by the Legislative Reference Bureau, "that OEQC be administratively allocated to the Governor's Office." The rationale for this transfer was set forth as:

- 1) It would provide OEQC with more stature and possibly more leverage in dealing with other agencies;
- 2) It would be perceived as a more widely neutral, non-biased, coordinating agency in the Governor's Office than in the Department of Health; and
- 3) Finally, the Legislative Reference Bureau recommended that OEQC develop a comprehensive action plan to guide the operations of the Department of Health as well as other departments and agencies. In so doing, LRB concluded that it would not be appropriate for OEQC to be placed, even for administrative purposes only, in the DOH or any other line department.

In summary, we concur with the findings of the Legislative Reference Bureau and support the intent of SB 3029.

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